

Take up the Task of Building A Revolutionary Party

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[Reprinted from *Liberation*, Vol. I, No. 5 (March 1968).
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[This is an English version of an article published in the Bengali weekly *Deshabrat* of January 11, 1968 - Editor, *Liberation*.]

Analysing the experiences of the Chinese Revolution, Chairman Mao Tse-tung said in his *On the People's Democratic Dictatorship*:

"A well-disciplined Party armed with the theory of Marxism-Leninism, using the method of self-criticism and linked with the masses of the people; an army under the leadership of such a Party, a united front of all revolutionary classes and all revolutionary groups under the leadership of such a Party- these are the three main weapons with which we have defeated the enemy" (*Selected Works*, Vol. 4, p.422).

It is not fortuitous that Chairman Mao, in mentioning the three main weapons, took up the question of a revolutionary Party, a Party "armed with the theory of Marxism-Leninism, using the method of self-criticism and linked with the masses of the people" at the very beginning. By this, Chairman Mao has upheld a universally applicable Marxist-Leninist scientific principle and pointed out how the truth of this principle was confirmed by the experience of the Chinese Revolution also.

The history of the Russian Revolution also shows how in the beginning of the first revolutionary upsurge in the twentieth century Lenin raised the question "of an organization of struggle, and of political agitation among the masses" ("Where To Begin", *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, p. 18). Lenin said: "Without a strong organization skilled in waging political struggle under all circumstances and at all times, there can be no question of that systematic plan of action, illumined by firm principles and steadfastly carried out, which alone is worthy of the name of tactics" (*Ibid.*).

Today no one in the international working class movement dare deny in principle the necessity of a party of the working class. But the experiences of the international communist movement show that it is not enough to accept in principle the necessity of such a party. The actual building up of such a party in practice is quite a difficult and complex problem. How and in what manner can the Party establish close and firm links with the broadest sections of the people? How and in what manner can the Party be kept constantly and fully armed with the Marxist-Leninist theories? How can the method of self-criticism be applied fruitfully and efficiently? How should the party discipline be built up creatively?

We must be able to find out satisfactory solutions to these practical problems relating to Party-building. And in solving these problems it becomes necessary at times to carry on big and long-drawn struggles inside the Party.

A close study of Lenin's *What Is To Be Done?* shows how even Lenin himself had to wage a fierce ideological struggle over the question: what should be the nature and substance of the Party's political agitation?

There is a certain breed of Marxists who, in practice, disclaim even the highest principle of Marxism, namely, that the toiling classes must win their liberation through their own efforts. They are afraid to follow the path indicated by Chairman Mao Tse-tung and are, therefore, afraid unreservedly to declare before the whole world that "The people, and the people alone, are the motive force in the making of world history" ("On Coalition Government", *Selected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 257), and that "The masses are the real heroes, while we ourselves are often childish and ignorant, and without this understanding it is impossible to acquire even the most rudimentary knowledge" ("Preface & Postscript to *Rural Surveys*", *Selected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 12).

These "Marxist" heroes are in reality nothing but quacks and have only one prescription to offer to the working class and the toiling people, namely, immediate economic demands and "palpable results." It often happens, however, that these people choose to become windbags in order to hide their real nature and begin to shout: "the political struggle of the working class is merely the widest, most developed, and most effective form of economic struggles", "lend the economic struggle itself a political character as far as possible," "the economic struggle is the most widely applicable method of drawing the masses into active political struggle", etc. These, incidentally, are typical examples of the wretched propaganda of the Economists since Lenin's days. At other times these people even talk about the politics of ministry-making and breaking. But they always take good care to avoid referring to the fundamental question in politics, its higher form, i.e., the question of state power.

Lenin had to carry out a fierce ideological struggle at the first stages of Party-building against these pseudo-Marxists and to demolish their theories.

From our own bitter experiences we have learnt that there is no dearth of such "Marxist" leaders in our country also. They also utter the same pseudo-Marxist phrases as referred to above or some variants of them. Their latest additions to such vocabulary are phrases like "the trade union movement should not be kept confined to the level of trade unionism but should be conducted with a political perspective" (According to newspaper reports, a conference of workers' representatives (?) held under the auspices of the Rashtriya Sangram Samity (a joint body of various trade unions in West Bengal) on December 31, last year took this profound decision. - S.R.)

The real trouble with these pseudo-Marxists is that they are mortally afraid to go beyond the existing limits set by the bourgeois system. What they really aspire to is to secure for themselves "respectable" positions inside the bourgeois setup with the help of the people by posing before them as their leaders. They talk politics all right but only of a low order. In all their agitation and propaganda they scrupulously avoid all talks of politics of the highest order, the real question -

the question of state power. These unscrupulous opportunists pretend that their hearts are "melting" at the misery of the workers and other toiling people and claim to be their leaders, but are, in reality, nothing but willing vehicles of bourgeois ideology in the workers' movement. The bourgeoisie, i.e., the people in "high places", invariably look down upon the workers and other toiling people, i.e., the men of the "lower depths" as the rabble and fools. The pseudo-Marxists have nothing in common with the great leaders of Marxism-Leninism - Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Mao Tse-tung and have nothing of the great love and sympathy that these leaders had or have for the people of "the lower depths". These opportunists have no faith whatsoever in the intelligence of the downtrodden masses and so are unable to follow Lenin, who always dared to tell the plain truth to the working class. At the beginning of the Russian Revolution, this is what Lenin said:

"The change-over from boom to crisis will not only teach our workers that united struggle is a permanent necessity, it will also destroy the harmful illusions that began to take shape at the time of industrial prosperity. By means of strikes, the workers were able in some places to force concessions from the employers with comparative ease, and this 'economic' struggle assumed an exaggerated significance; it was forgotten that trade unions and strikes can, at best, only win slightly better terms for the sale of labour-power as a commodity. **Trade unions and strikes cannot help in times of crisis** when there is no demand for this 'commodity', **they cannot change the conditions** which convert labour-power into a commodity and which doom the masses of working people to dire need and unemployment. **To change these conditions, a revolutionary struggle against the whole existing social and political system is necessary;** the industrial crisis will convince very many workers of the justice of this statement." ("Another Massacre", *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, pp. 26-27. Emphasis mine - S.R.)

Lenin, in the very beginning, taught the working class:

"Strikes, therefore, teach the workers to unite; they show them that they can struggle against the capitalists only when they are united; strikes teach the workers to think of the struggle of the whole working class against the whole class of factory owners and against the arbitrary, police government. This is the reason why socialists call strikes 'a school of war', a school in which the workers learn to make war on their enemies for the liberation of the whole people, of all who labour, from the yoke of government officials and from the yoke of capital.

"A school of war' is however, not war itself. When strikes are widespread among the workers, some of the workers (including some socialists) begin to believe that the working class can confine itself to strikes, strike funds, or strike associations alone: that by strikes alone the working class can achieve a considerable improvement in its conditions or even its emancipation. When they see what power there is in a united working class and even in small strikes, some think that the working class has only to organize a general strike throughout the whole country for the workers to get everything they want from the capitalists and the government...*It is a mistaken idea.* Strikes are *one* of the ways in which the working class struggles for its emancipation, but they are not the only way; and if workers do not turn their attention to other means of conducting the struggle, they will slow down the growth and the successes of the working class....Furthermore, even in those countries where workers' unions exist openly and have huge funds at their disposal, the working class can still not confine itself to strikes as a

means of struggle. All that is necessary is a hitch in the affairs of industry (a crisis, such as the one that is approaching in Russia today) and the factory owners will even deliberately cause strikes, because it is to their advantage to cease work for a time and to deplete the workers' funds. The workers, therefore, cannot under any circumstances, confine themselves to strike actions and strike associations." ("On Strikes", written at the end of 1899; *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, pp. 317-18).

While a crisis was approaching and while taking up the task of building the Party, Lenin stressed before the Russian workers the need for training in other methods also. And what did he point out in particular?

The experience of the Russian Revolution as well as of the entire international working class movement has made it abundantly clear that "political power grows out of the barrel of the gun". This simple formulation of Chairman Mao crystallizes a rich experience and is directly based upon Lenin's teachings and is the continuation and development of Lenin's heritage. Similarly, the formulations of Chairman Mao that in the final analysis it is the people that decide the course of human progress and about the role of "the conscious activity of man" reflect his profound understanding of the same and are infused with the great confidence that Lenin had in the working class.

But why do we need to remember all this today when we are proceeding towards building up a genuinely revolutionary party in India? Are we then opposed to the strike actions of the workers and employees, or to general strikes? Absolutely not. Strikes are "a school of war". No genuine Communist can ever think of opposing them as a policy.

But we do want our workers and employees to become fully conscious of all the aspects of the strike action, its effectiveness and its limitations from a truly Marxist-Leninist point of view; we do want them to raise their consciousness to a higher level and train themselves in such a manner that they become able to use and direct the weapon of strike actions to help develop and advance the genuinely revolutionary stream, namely, the agrarian revolution. We know what a great role the strike actions play in educating the masses about the necessity of united action. But we also want to tell the working class that strike action is only one of many weapons in their hands and that they cannot afford to confine all their activities to handling that weapon alone. They must necessarily be able to train themselves up in order to use other forms of struggle, other weapons also. Today they must also be able to forge the new weapon - the weapon of the revolutionary struggles of the peasants. In the present conditions of India this has become the main political task before the Indian working class.

Lenin set forth certain features characteristic of a revolutionary situation in a given country. Judging by these, we find that an excellent revolutionary situation is prevailing in India today. What is more, the revolutionary peasant struggle in Naxalbari, led by the revolutionary comrades of the Darjeeling district and guided by the ever-shining Thought of Mao Tse-tung, the greatest living Marxist-Leninist of our day, has opened up before us the path along which the Indian Revolution can advance to victory. The people's revolutionary struggle in our country has to follow this path to victory. This is the path of the revolutionary struggle of the people waged under the leadership of the working class organized around a clear-cut political programme and

based upon the alliance of the workers and the peasants; this is the path to establish and develop, under the leadership of the working class, revolutionary peasant bases in the rural areas, to create liberated zones by overthrowing the feudal forces in the villages and to expand these zones through a long, fierce, protracted and bloody struggle until imperialism and its lackeys, the comprador and bureaucratic bourgeoisie and feudalism, are overthrown and the entire country is liberated. The most urgent task before the working class today is, therefore, to begin to prepare for this in every manner possible. But the revisionists, neo-revisionists, right-wing petty-bourgeois pseudo-Marxist- the leaders of the CPI (M), Dangeite and other left parties who claim to be Marxists-have chosen to rally behind Sri Ajoy Mukherjee, a thoroughly anti-communist Gandhite and faithful adherent of the reactionary Congress Party's policies and ideals, just at this moment and launched a "crusade" of so-called civil disobedience movement in order to get back their lost ministerial *guddis* and also for distracting people's attention to a quite different direction considered 'safe' for the ruling classes.

Unfortunate though it is, still the fact is that perverted politics continues to be spread even from the platform of the central organizations of the working class because they are dominated by the revisionists and neo-revisionists. So it is evident that today the task of building up a genuine revolutionary working class party can be carried out successfully only by waging a determined and powerful ideological struggle. And during this ideological struggle, we must repeatedly and tirelessly explain before the working class and other toiling people the essential question in politics-the question of state power and the question of the highest form of class struggle as well as the orientation of this struggle, i.e., the specific form it will take in this country. In order that we may successfully carry out this task, it is imperative for us to take all-round measures to build up a genuinely revolutionary party which, as Chairman Mao teaches, is the first of the three weapons necessary to make a successful revolution.

No doubt, the task is difficult. Moreover, the ruling classes have turned their spearhead of attack against us and thus made it more difficult. Still we are proud of it, of being reaction's main target. And it has never been possible for the reactionary rulers in any country to subdue the determination of revolutionaries through persecution and repression. We, the revolutionaries in the CPI(M) and outside, shall with all modesty strive to become, through unsparing and hard labour, worthy disciples of Lenin and Mao Tse-tung in this country. We have no doubt whatsoever that we shall be able to win over all genuine revolutionaries and all honest political workers seeking a change to our side.

And we shall never forget what Lenin taught us:

"To establish and consolidate Party means to establish and consolidate unity among all Russian Social-Democrats (read: the Indian Communists - S.R.); such unity cannot be decreed, it cannot be brought about by a decision, say, of a meeting of representatives; it must be worked for. In the first place, it is necessary to develop a common Party literature - common, not only in the sense that it must serve the whole of the Russian movement (read: the Indian movement - S.R.) rather than separate districts, that it must discuss the questions of the movement as a whole and assist the class-conscious proletarians in their struggle instead of dealing merely with local questions, but common also in the sense that it must unite all the available literary forces, that it must express all shades of opinion and views prevailing among Russian Social-Democrats (read:

revolutionaries in the Indian Communist movement - S.R.), not as isolated workers, but as comrades united in the ranks of a single organization by a common struggle. Secondly, we must work to achieve an organization especially for the purpose of establishing and maintaining contact among all the centres of the movement, of supplying complete and timely information about the movement, and of delivering our newspapers and periodicals regularly to all parts of Russia (read: all parts of India - S.R.). Only when such an organization has been founded, only when a Russian (read: Indian - S.R.) socialist post has been established, will the Party possess a sound foundation, only then will it become a real fact and, therefore, a mighty political force" ("Draft of a Declaration of the Editorial Board of *ISKRA* and *ZARYA*", *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, pp. 323-24).

In our country the revisionists and the neo-revisionists have exposed themselves. Therefore, it is only they who will be excluded from having any say in this great task of building a genuinely revolutionary party in our country.

NOTES

- *ISKRA* (The Spark): The first all-Russian illegal Marxist newspaper founded by Lenin in 1900. While in exile in Siberia, Lenin evolved a plan for its publication abroad. It played an important role in building the Marxist revolutionary party of the working class in Russia. *Iskra* became the centre for the unification of Party forces, for the gathering and training of Party workers in Russia. Lenin was actually its editor-in-chief and the leading figure.
- *ZARYA* (Dawn): A Marxist scientific and political magazine published legally in Stuttgart in 1901-2 by the *Iskra* Editorial Board.